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THE SALVATION ARMY—A CRITICISM

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The extraordinary development of the Salvation Army during the forty years of its existence, not alone in England and the United States, but in many other countries of the civilized world, has stamped it in the minds of a majority of people as a successful enterprise whose policies have been justified by its widespread success and whose work does not, for that very reason, require the careful scrutiny to which other charities should be subjected. How far this popular attitude is due to the worship of success and how far to the attitude of the Salvation Army's officers it is difficult to determine. It is doubtless true, however, that the Salvation Army fosters the impression that this is a different kind of philanthropy to which the usual tests should not apply.

It is the purpose of this paper to question the wisdom of this attitude on the part of the giving public toward the work of the Salvation Army, and to point out certain tests which may very well be applied to any large charitable enterprise and by which the success of the Salvation Army also should be measured.

The contributors, subscribers, or donors to any charity, in short, that part of our community by means of whose gifts an enterprise continues to exist and to grow, and which in the case of the Salvation Army has caused it to grow to national and international dimensions, have a responsibility in any philanthropic undertaking which but few of the donors realize. The donor is not swayed as much as in times past with the benefit he himself derives, but even now his motives are not singly for the interest of the charitable beneficiary; he still considers his own interest or his soul's welfare. This generation has, however, made great progress in applying tests to determine what benefits will result, and it has learned to keep such control of many an enterprise as will ensure its careful administration and adaptation to the needs of the day. In the ultimate analysis the donors to the Salvation Army must get

much of the credit for the good results which General Booth's family has been able to accomplish with the funds placed at their disposal, and likewise must, to a considerable extent, be held responsible for any evils that may have resulted or for their failure to place their money in other hands where it might have done even more good.

Perhaps a philanthropist is still entitled to the privilege of establishing such an enterprise as is dear to his heart and of lavishing upon it his thousands or millions granting that it is clearly for a moral purpose, although an increasingly large number of thinking men and women would place even such individual enterprises under the supervision of a governmental agency. The giving public is, however, less and less ready to give large funds unless they can be placed in the hands of trustees who work without pay and who give an account of their stewardship to their constituency every year in such terms as will make it clear to the contributors where the enterprise stands.

To what extent does the Salvation Army answer these simple safeguards? The work of the Salvation Army in the United States is carried on through three distinct corporations:—The Salvation Army, incorporated under the laws of the State of New York, May 12, 1899; The Salvation Army Industrial Homes Company, also incorporated in 1899; and The Reliance Trading Company, incorporated November 29, 1902.

The organization of the Salvation Army is as follows: Miss Booth is President; William Peart is Vice-President; William Conrad Hicks, Treasurer; Gustav H. Reinhardsen, Secretary; Madison J. H. Ferris, Legal Secretary. The directors are the above-named officers with the exception of George A. Kilbey, who is substituted in the place of Mr. Reinhardsen. This is then clearly not a board of trustees in the usually accepted meaning of the word in charitable enterprises but more like a board of directors of a financial corporation, each director and officer being an employee of the company.

The Salvation Army Industrial Homes Company and the Reliance Trading Company are New Jersey corporations, of both of which Miss Evangeline Booth, Commander of the Salvation Army, is President, and Ransom Caygill, a capitalist, who is not officially connected with the Salvation Army, is treasurer and business manager. A number of the directors of the Salvation Army

are also said to hold a considerable amount of preferred stock of their business philanthropies.

Donors of old clothes, shoes, furniture, magazines, newspapers and books, give them not to the Salvation Army but to a corporation which pays six per cent dividends on preferred stock guaranteed by the Salvation Army. Housewives have generally supposed that the salvage as far as it could be used went direct to the poor instead of being sold for a profit, and that magazines and newspapers and books were distributed to hospitals, prisons and the homes of the poor instead of being baled for profit to pay interest on a loan with which to finance the corporations. Likewise, the profits from the sale of the "War Cry" and the "Post" fountain pens go not to the Salvation Army, but to the Reliance Trading Company.

In England a much more critical attitude has been taken on the part of the general public toward these business philanthropies, and in well-informed circles the financial policy of the Salvation Army has been watched with considerable concern. Under the title of "The High Finance of Salvationism," Mr. Manson, in his recent book,¹ gives a chapter of interesting information regarding the Army's financial history during the last twenty years. The earliest large enterprise of its business philanthropies was the Salvation Army Building Association, Limited, formed in 1884. Its object was principally the negotiation of loans to advance the aims and objects of the Salvation Army. The management of the enterprise remained independent of the Army, and on this account, it seems, trouble arose which led to its liquidation. "The directors were not willing to lend their shareholders' money to the Army on the conditions as to interest or security to which the Army might have been prepared to agree."²

In "Darkest England," General Booth had among other plans proposed the founding of a poor man's bank, but when the Reliance Bank, Limited, was founded, the original design of lending money to the "little" man had become altered to that of borrowing money from him. The bank lends money to the Army. In its balance sheet for March 31, 1904, one-third of its apparent assets consisted of "loans on mortgage of Salvation Army house, shop and hall property."

¹"*The Salvation Army and the Public*," by John Manson, Routledge, London, 1906.

²Manson, "*The Salvation Army and the Public*," p. 76.
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The arrangement then amounts to this: General Booth is substantially the Reliance Bank, Ltd. As banker he borrows money from the public and lends a large proportion of it to himself as general of his religious organization; as general he receives from public contributions to his corps, money wherewith to pay himself interest in the capacity of lender, and it is this money which enables him to pay his investors their interest at the starting point.³

The bank has not been able to find enough capital for the Army, so the Salvation Army Assurance Society, Limited, was incorporated. The bankers of this society are the Reliance Bank, Limited, which again is General Booth. About five-sixths of the society's 293,108 policies in force in 1903 were industrial and 54 per cent of its premium income was swallowed up in management expenses and agents' commissions. As long as investors keep their confidence in business philanthropies that maintain no safeguards but the personal honesty of General Booth and his associates and successors, the enterprises may remain prosperous. But will this confidence last?

The Salvation Army is apparently as much a church denomination as the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Church of Christ, Scientist or Dowieism, with whose doctrine of faith-healing General Booth's Church has much in common. There is this important distinction that the Salvation Army members do not bear the total expense of its maintenance, and therefore the general public is asked to contribute. This "people's church" has a religious and social programme. By means of the latter it has succeeded in interesting a large segment of every other church denomination, and has obtained large funds, part of which are used in the furtherance of its religious plans with which, however, many of its largest donors have little or no sympathy.

The amount of money expended in the religious work of the Army in the United Kingdom during the last fifteen years is estimated at \$30,000,000 while only about \$2,500,000 has been expended upon social work, a ratio of twelve to one. If an accurate statement of each of the two departments of the Army's work could be made, and an accounting for moneys expended in each department could be rendered, any unfair criticism that may now be current regarding the use of the funds gained by means of the

³Manson, "The Salvation Army and the Public," p. 82.

"social" appeal, would disappear. So far the public have not been given the proper means of judging of the efficacy of the organization's work in proportion to its cost, and therefore the question naturally arises whether the Army's hesitation to give accurate figures is a necessary part of its plans.

For some years the Salvation Army has published "annual statements" of its three corporations. These contain balance sheets of the various departments of the New York and Chicago headquarters. Annual statements for 1906 were audited by The Audit Company of New York City, 43 Cedar Street, and mark a large advance over those of previous years. They are, however, but a fragment of what the public should have. They give even those accustomed to examine financial reports but a slight notion of what has been done during the year with the money that has flowed into its treasury, and they are quite unintelligible to the average person who may get a chance to see them. No annual report containing an account of the work the Army has accomplished during the twelvemonth is published. No detailed statement of the contributors and the amounts of their contributions or of the detailed expenditures, is made public. To the large majority of the intelligent public, the "annual statements," with their formidable array of figures serve but to hide the true state of affairs of the Army.

The nearest approach to an "annual report" is a little pamphlet called "Where the Shadows Lengthen," published by the Reliance Trading Company in 1907. This contains various groups of statistics, but, with the exception of the Prison Gate Mission, nowhere tells the period to which these statistics apply. If the Salvation Army is not willing to state with accuracy the time during which this work has been done, can it blame the public if the reliability of its figures is questioned?

Important as an adequate and intelligent statement of its work and an annual statistical and financial report is, the Salvation Army should, in the second place, be judged as other enterprises are judged, by the purposes it is aiming to accomplish and the measure of its success in carrying them out.

What and how much is the Salvation Army actually doing with the human beings for whose benefit it was called into existence? As before referred to, it has two aims, to reach both body and soul. Its doctrine of salvation promulgated in large measure in its

daily meetings is, however, not the basis of its appeal to the general public, but rather its social work, and it is because of the Salvation Army's social efficiency that large and small contributions come to its support from outside of its own ranks.

It is not an easy task to get a correct estimate of the work of any large enterprise even where careful reports are available, but in the case of the Salvation Army, with the divergent character of its work in different places, its inadequate statement of results and its unsatisfactory statistics, this is almost impossible. But one can certainly not be blamed for taking a critical attitude toward an enterprise which has stood so much in a class by itself.

We shall prefer to attribute the establishment of the rather shaky business philanthropies and the weaknesses in administration to the necessity of borrowing large lump sums for which General Booth believed the public would furnish the interest through their annual contributions but which he could not hope to obtain as gifts. General Booth undertook a large scheme and his ambitions fostered by the devotion of his staff officers and many of the rank and file outran his resources.

It is, however, reasonable to suppose that a "people's church" like the Salvation Army has reached its position of confidence which enables it to appeal successfully year after year without making full, accurate and intelligent accounting, because it has also on the credit side of its ledger a large measure of beneficent, religious and social work which has satisfied the community's rough-and-ready test in individual cases. The community has learned that while possibly the "Salvation lassie" could not boast of college training or foreign travel, her garb was the symbol of a life of simplicity and devotion; it has learned that the enthusiasm and self-sacrifice and devotion of its men and women, with an optimism that overcomes obstacles, often led them into hovel, gutter or brothel from which others would hold aloof, but from which they would now and then win back some sinking soul to decency and self-respect. Some of its rescue homes for women are among the most effective, and some of its lodging houses for men are among the best that can be found in their class.

But while we give credit for a large measure of self-sacrificing work, is it unfair to inquire what the Salvation Army is doing with a group of more or less clearly defined social tasks, or if its

activities have not run in these channels, to consider what other social tasks it has set itself to do. One of these tasks with which the Salvation Army has come in contact is to find an effective means of dealing with that most unsatisfactory of human beings, the homeless man. With few exceptions, the homeless belong to the vagrant class which live from hand to mouth, avoiding honest toil in every possible way, to whose mischief the officials of railroads ascribe many wrecks, loss of many lives, and untold expense, and of whom police courts are full every day on account of serious or trivial offenses. For at least twenty years the Salvation Army has had these homeless ones in their lodging houses and has provided them bed and board at nominal expense. The physical and moral condition of thousands has come intimately to their notice. Has the Salvation Army recognized its problem? Has it sought to stem the tide of homelessness by taking steps or considering ways and means to dry up the stream at its source? Has it even to any great extent given the men good, cleanly care?

To ascertain what was done with the homeless in the various cities of this country inquiries were sent some little time ago to persons in Boston, Buffalo, Washington, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago, Grand Rapids, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Kansas City, Denver and Seattle, to men who were intimately acquainted with the activities of organized charitable work. From one of the cities came this reply: "The Army maintains what they call the Working Men's Hotel, a typical lodging house which, in the judgment of well-informed people here, accentuates rather than assists in solving the problem of homeless men and boys." This from another of these cities: "The Salvation Army lodging houses are of no assistance in solving the problem of homeless men and boys; gathering them together without inquiry they unwittingly increase the tramp problem and add to the burden of the other charities of the city." And yet another writes: "The Salvation Army lodging house, as conducted in this city for the past four or five years, is the worst we ever saw. A committee of our board of trustees has investigated and found the conditions indescribably bad. We do not consider their efforts in behalf of homeless men of the slightest value." The correspondents from other cities but echo these criticisms.

In justice to the Army it should be said that the Salvation Army Hotel, Chatham Square, New York City, is a clean twenty-

five-cent lodging house, and its appointments and management suggest what each community should expect the Salvation Army to do if it undertakes to provide for the vagrant class. The People's Palace in Boston is a splendidly equipped lodging house having many of the features of a well equipped Young Men's Christian Association building. The minimum price for rooms is twenty-five cents, and for that reason it does not reach many of the vagrant class.

In the summer of 1906 two women, who were anxious to learn for themselves what the problem of work with homeless women implied, spent a night in the Salvation Army's Women's Lodging House of New York City. The change of scene might account for the sleepless night they spent, but the filth, vermin and lack of ordinary sanitary conveniences they found were extreme. No effort was made to befriend the women or to bring religious or other uplifting influences to bear.

The Salvation Army appeals for funds on the plea that it is lodging thousands of the homeless. Should not the giving public insist, if it is asked to contribute toward the maintenance of these lodging houses which, according to the "annual statements" of 1906, are all but self-supporting (in 1905, according to the statement filed with the Secretary of State of New York, there was a balance of \$21,730.12), that no houses be maintained that are not sanitary, and where the congregating of men and boys or of women may become demoralizing.

The further interest that the Salvation Army has in remedying the problem of homelessness is best expressed through the work of the sixty-five industrial homes. During 1906, 8,552 passed out of these homes after a stay of from six to eight weeks. They are said to have passed out to "permanent positions," but as a "permanent position" is defined as one taken by the week, and the Army has no statistics that would show how many stayed at least a week, or how many came back to the homes, there is grave question as to whether the Salvation Army has taken more than the first step toward solving homelessness. Does not the giving public expect the Salvation Army to join hands with those who are addressing themselves to the task of ending vagrancy and homelessness?

A second type of social work in which the Salvation Army has been interested for some years is in the relief of needy families. In this most delicate of charitable tasks, namely, that of providing

proper and ample relief under the best social control, the helpfulness and effectiveness with which this task is accomplished is generally measured by the extent to which all charitable agencies work together. In charity, co-operation spells efficiency. In fifteen of the large cities of the United States from which inquiry was made, it was learned that the character of the Salvation Army relief work varied in proportion to the intelligence, devotion and experience of individual officers, but in ten there was no co-operation; in four, slight; and in but one (Buffalo, N. Y.), good co-operation. The correspondent from one city writes: "We are not able to learn that the Salvation Army in its relief work co-operates with any charitable agency. Though a portion of their Christmas list was sent us, the volume of their co-operation is unworthy of mention." From a second city: "The Army has no desire to co-operate with other helpful societies or agencies." From a third: "The Salvation Army absolutely declines to co-operate with other agencies."

A former private secretary at headquarters explained this lack of co-operation by attributing it to a fear that the Salvation Army had of "being frozen out" unless it did relief work, the need for which would disappear through intelligent co-operation with other agencies. The notion that the Salvation Army deals with families that do not come to the attention of other charitable societies, both before and after becoming known to the Army, has no foundation in fact. For these reasons one is forced to the conclusion that instead of being willing to profit by the success and mistakes of other agencies, the Salvation Army remains unwilling to prevent duplication and is content to work at cross-purposes rather than to join hands with others, for fear of indirectly subjecting its work to others' scrutiny.

An enterprise that co-operates so slightly with other charitable agencies may be expected to have organized its own thrift agencies, such as fuel or stamp-saving societies, its own model pawn shops, its own campaigns for clean milk and for cleaner, safer and sunnier tenements, its anti-tuberculosis committees and camps, that it may do all that modern philanthropy deems essential in social work. Perhaps work of this sort is done, but the public is not made aware of it and the impression is current that the Salvation Army does not fail to advertise thoroughly all of its enterprises.

It is obviously unfair to test the efficiency of any social enterprise by laying down certain specific lines of development to which it must conform in order that it may be called a success. It is reasonable, however, to expect a large national enterprise which has assets of several million dollars to turn its face in the direction of preventive measures, to dry up the sources of crime and poverty, and to reduce the number of deaths and the amount of sickness, working along lines which science is clearly pointing out.

The Salvation Army points to its farm colonies as such an enterprise. General Booth has regarded them as the foundation stones of its regenerative social work, and large sums of money for its various forms of activity have flowed into Salvation Army coffers because of this experiment. The farm colony at Hadleigh, England, was to be the prototype of a large number which the Army hoped to establish in all parts of the United States and Canada. General Booth's statement that the proper solution of the problem of poverty is to place the "landless man" on the "manless land" is appreciated more as an epigram than as a remedy. The twentieth century still waits to see how that can be effectively done with men who lack capital, initiative and character, for it is such that make up the pauper class in every land. Of the three colonies which were started with an imperfect knowledge of American conditions the one at Fort Herrick, Ohio, has ceased to be a farm colony and is now used as an inebriates' home. The colonists at Fort Amity, Colo., and Fort Romie, Cal., have in most instances become self-supporting and have acquired a considerable equity in their homesteads, but no data are adduced as proof that they were, just prior to the period of colonization, dependent upon public or private charity; on the contrary there is a considerable amount of proof that few, if any, belonged to that group which corresponds to what William Booth calls "the submerged tenth," for whom the farm-colony was hailed as a panacea. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the department committee of the English Parliament appointed to consider H. Rider Haggard's report on the Salvation Army colonies in America, saying, with regard to Fort Romie and Fort Amity, "the settlements, then, do not prove that, so far as colonization is concerned, unskilled and untrained persons can be taken from towns, put upon the land and thrive there."

The enthusiasm of the colonists at Fort Romie and Fort Amity,
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is easily explained. Their industry is to be commended and they are to be congratulated for having been the fortunate ones with which to try this "experiment." American colonists who have "certificates of both physical and moral soundness," and who have a desire to till the soil, will succeed where land is provided on easy terms. It is impossible, however, to understand how Mr. Haggard could see in it a solution for England's difficulties with its pauper class.

There are other enterprises which the Salvation Army has undertaken, and among these is one that deserves a large measure of commendation and support, namely, the establishment of its rescue and maternity homes. In a number of the cities of this country these are among the most effective of their kind. We fear, however, that the claim that 93 per cent of the fallen women who passed through them are "restored to lives of virtue" is a statement born of optimism and ignorance of results.

Our communities are grateful for the Salvation Army's interest in the welfare of children, but we have not learned that the Army has taken any part in such important movements as the agitation against child-labor, or that in favor of the establishment of city playgrounds, recreation piers, seaside or city parks.

The Salvation Army preaches temperance and points out in vivid colors the effects of the curse of drink. It has an inebriates' farm at Fort Herrick. Has the Salvation Army also considered searching out preventive measures by which the moribund thousands may be kept from sinking prematurely into drunkards' graves?

By means of its national organization and its wide-spread corps the Salvation Army is peculiarly well fitted to make itself felt in urging questions of moral reform and agitating for such appropriate legislation as will strengthen the hands of those who are bringing about better civic and moral conditions. There are, however, no data at hand that in these directions this large national organization, doing social work, has taken any part in such reforms, national or local, or has at any time tried to bring about a better social condition by proposing more stringent laws or by taking any part in actively supporting such measures as may be proposed by others.

Instead of striking at the root of social evils, the Army is too frequently inclined to take part in remedies that catch the applause of the unthinking public, but are apt to be shallow and rather sensa-

tional. When, in the winter of 1905-06, the newspapers misrepresented certain statements of Mr. Robert Hunter's, so as to make him say that 70,000 children in New York were going breakfastless to school, the Salvation Army at once, without a study of facts, causes or social consequences, opened breakfast rooms. To their credit it should be said that these were closed as soon as it became apparent that few children came and the parents of most of those that came were amply able to provide their children breakfasts. In the spring of 1907, the Salvation Army established its anti-suicide bureau with similar haste, and the Sunday newspapers got material for a new story. Meanwhile others were making a careful study of causes of suicide, and when it became apparent that the poverty and loss of employment had but little to do with the suicides' deed in these prosperous times, the anti-suicide bureau came to the end of its career.

As before mentioned, the public is not inclined to require that the Salvation Army shall undertake all or a majority of these tasks outlined, but it may reasonably expect that an organization that has been entrusted with millions, and is constantly emphasizing its social work, should have performed some of these well, and that it should have begun to study causes, and attack the evils at their source.

A rather intimate knowledge of the Salvation Army's work leads one to the conclusion that the rank and file of the Army's officers and members who are actively engaged in the social work are a devoted group who make up much in devotion for what they lack in intelligence. They do not realize that society is a complicated organism whose elements must be well understood in order that constructive work can be done and that the social worker needs a well-trained mind as well as a good heart and good intentions. That General Booth recognizes the value of these requirements is attested by his desire to establish a "University of Humanity," for which, it may be noted, at least four of the American universities have already provided through their courses in practical social work.

It is also quite apparent that the Salvation Army's field of social work has thus far been restricted. It has resourceful leaders, however, and large support, and it may be expected that the Army will become increasingly useful in the future.